4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-S (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION

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I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

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Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Mary Pinckney

I TOO SCARED THEN

795 People say if you look over your left shoulder you'll see ghosts. Tell about hag and all kind of thing like that. I look back over my left shoulder all the time, I don't see no ghost. I never see none, but I believe in ghost. Some call 'em ghost, some call 'em spooks, boodyman. That's the way we is call 'em when we was little—boodyman.

538 795 That old man, Michael Brown, he's always be to our house. I guess he's 'round about seventy-five. He is come over every Sunday and he sit down and talk about all these old-time thing. Talk about old-time ghost. He say when he go home nighttime he have to carry a stick and feel his way, 'specially if it dark, 'cause ghost is crowded in the path. He take stick go "whicha-whoocha-whoocha," clear his way. I be glad when he go home 'cause he talk about those thing and make me scared. Mama like to listen. Not me. I say, "Take your hat and go home." I too scared then. Ghost!

Mr. James Mackey

795 THEY'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FOOT

Some people died, their spirit walk around. If a person died happy, they don't bother you. But people died bad, well, they'll knock you off your foot.

795 ●781 One most knock me off my foot one night. I was coming out just about dusk-dark and something come around me like a long black snake—tie around me. It shoot up and I ain't feel like I was onto the ground at all. Only way I came back in this world, a dog smell my scent and that dog bark. Didn't for that, I'd been *gone*.

When my foot touch ground, feel like I been off the ground. I go and curse 'em. They say if I pray I might of get off much better. The more I curse, the more I guess he try to knock me.

When the feeling get back to me, then I start to walk—taking my time just like when a person sick—and I could imagine he up behind me. My hair on my head just tauten up. I got back home, gone to bed that night with *all* my clothes on.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

LIVIN' HUMBLE

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"Gettin' religion" is a soul-stirring matter with the Negro. When he feels the serious need of salvation he responds to the appeal of the minister to come forward to the "Mou'ners' Bench"—also called the "Anxious" or "Mercy Seat." There, at the bench directly in front of the pulpit, he kneels while the congregation sings an appropriate song. In the old days he wandered at night until he managed to "come through." Many lines in the oldest songs refer to customs that are now practically obsolete. I cannot imagine a young Negro today wandering alone at night until his "head got wet by the mid'l-night dew."

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Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Christ is a waitin' to receive
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
None but tuh righteous shall git thah
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
O my head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
I pray to my God until I come through
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Ever since I been converted
I been tryin' to live 'umble.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

533
•781

From the reference to "Mornin' star was a witness too" and "I heard a voice an' I saw no one," followed by "It mus' be Jesus passin' by," it is apparent that this unusual version of "Swing Low" was another of the songs appropriate to the "comin' through" of "sinners," who had agonized at night in order to achieve the proper exaltation.

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Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
It mus' be Jesus passin' by
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
I heard a voice an' I saw no one
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
Mornin' star was a witness too
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low.